

preschool class contains six Title I children and four children with disabilities. the program costs would be shared. Part A would pay 60 percent of the costs and special education would pay 40 percent of the costs.

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT



# **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

## **CONTENTS**

Introduction	1
State level	2
State plan	2
Parental participation in State plan development	3
Committee of Practitioners	3
LEA level	4
LEA plan	4
LEA parental involvement policy	5
Evaluation of effectiveness of LEA parental involvement policy	6
Reservation of funds	7
School level	9
School parent involvement policy	9
Policy involvement	10
Shared responsibilities for high student performance	11
School-parent compacts	11
What is a school-parent compact?	12
Why a compact?	12
What a school-parent compact must include	12
Who participates in compact development?	14

Building capacity for involvement	16
Building parental capacity in schoolwide programs	18
Accessibility	22
Parental information and resource centers	23
Professional development	25
LEA process for school review and improvement	25

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

*"Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children." (Goal 8 - National Education Goals)*

## **INTRODUCTION**

When schools work together with families to support learning, children are inclined to succeed not just in school, but throughout life. Three decades of research have shown that parental participation in schooling improves student learning. Such participation of parents and families is critical not only in the very beginning of the educational process, but throughout a child's entire academic career.

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Title I, Part A has been restructured to serve as a means for helping all students to achieve challenging academic standards. To accomplish this objective, the Act promotes the formation of new partnerships, particularly home-school partnerships, to help address more completely the full range of student needs that impact on their learning.

The parental participation provisions in Part A as well as those in the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Goals 2000) reflect these research findings and emphasize the importance of parental involvement. Part A strengthens and builds on the requirements set forth in its predecessor, Chapter 1, with partnership provisions that are designed to benefit not only students and parents, but schools and communities, as well. Both pieces of legislation recognize the important roles that school, family, and community members play in helping our children to succeed in school, and both provide greater opportunity for these entities to participate directly in school governance and in the design and implementation of State school reform plans. Part A acknowledges the full range of roles that parents can play in their children's education.

Throughout this document, the words "parent" and "family" refer to all of the various configurations of primary caregiving units to which children belong, and are intended to have the broadest possible meaning.

---

## TIPS FROM THE RESEARCH ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

While parental involvement can take many forms, here are some basic tips from research on creating parental involvement programs that work (Rioux and Berla, 1994; Flaxman and Inger, 1991)

- Good family involvement programs do not *always* require new or additional money.
  - All parents and families want the best for their children and can help them succeed.
  - The benefits of parental involvement are not confined to early childhood or the elementary grades; parental involvement provides strong benefits to children through high school.
  - Leaders among parents must be recognized as special, and schools should take care to nurture their continued involvement; schools should continuously nurture new parent leaders.
  - People and organizations will stretch to meet the needs of the program in creative and innovative ways.
  - Children do best when parents are enabled to play four key roles in their children's learning: teachers (helping children at home), supporters (contributing their skills to the school), advocates (helping children receive fair treatment), and decision-makers (participating in joint problem-solving with the school at every level). (Henderson and Berla, 1994)
- 

## THE STATE LEVEL

### State Plan

Under section 1111, the State plan describes the high standards and assessments the State will establish or is using for all children, as well as how the State will fulfill its additional responsibilities to enable Part A students to meet these standards. These endeavors are linked to the State's systemic reform efforts, if any, under Goals 2000 or another Statewide process, to ensure that the performance expected of children in Part A schools is the same as that expected for all children, and that Title I, Part A becomes a vehicle for systemic reform. For school districts and schools, the State plan provides a framework for the implementation of the Part A program. It is the point of reference for what all children in the State should learn, and for how to create opportunities for learning to happen.

## **Parental Participation in State Plan Development**

A State plan must be developed in consultation with **parents**, as well as with LEAs, teachers, pupil services personnel, administrators and other staff. This consultation will ensure that parents are involved when States are developing their challenging content and student performance standards.

Although "consultation" is not specifically defined in the statute, effective consultation would--

- ◆ Be broad-based, reaching out to the wide range of parents in the State, including those with limited literacy, limited English proficiency, or disabilities.
- ◆ Be ongoing throughout the process of development and implementation.
- ◆ Cover all the core elements of the State plan--the setting of challenging content and performance standards, including establishment of proficient and advanced levels of proficiency; deciding what constitutes adequate yearly progress sufficient to achieve the goal of all children served meeting the State's proficient and advanced levels; development of a set of high-quality student assessments for all students; the methods by which the State will help each LEA and school develop the capacity to comply with the LEA and school-based requirements of the Act; and the factors deemed appropriate to provide students with an opportunity to achieve the knowledge and skills described in the standards.

## **Committee of Practitioners**

Each State must assure in its State plan that a Committee of Practitioners, which shall include parents, has been established to advise it on carrying out the responsibilities it has for administering the Part A program. The work of this Committee is critical because it must review State Title I policy, rules and regulations and advise the State on these governing principles. Parents on this Committee should be broadly representative of Title I parents in the State. With LEA representatives, administrators, teachers, private school representatives, and others, parents should be involved meaningfully in State plan development and continue to be involved in State implementation of the plan through periodic reviews and consultation on revisions necessary to reflect significant changes in strategy and program.

## THE LEA LEVEL

### LEA Plan

For a State to approve an LEA's plan, the plan must demonstrate how the LEA will enable Part A schools to substantially help all Part A children meet the State's challenging content and student performance standards that all children are expected to meet. In this regard, the central responsibilities of the LEA to improve teaching and learning are through (1) intensive and sustained professional development; (2) the provision of technical assistance and support to help schools implement their Part A programs and establish effective improvement processes; and (3) the coordination of Part A services with educational, health and social services.

These three major areas all have strong implications for family participation. However, the role of parents and families is referenced specifically in some of the LEA plan requirements, including--

- ◆ A description of any additional high-quality student assessments the LEA will use to provide information to parents, students, and teachers on the progress being made toward meeting the State student performance standards.
- ◆ A description of the LEA's strategy to provide professional development for teachers and, where appropriate, parents, pupil services personnel, administrators, and other staff.
- ◆ A description of how teachers, in consultation with parents, administrators, and pupil services personnel, will identify eligible children most in need in targeted assistance schools.
- ◆ An assurance that the LEA will inform eligible schools and parents of schoolwide program authority.
- ◆ An assurance that the LEA will coordinate and collaborate, to the extent feasible and necessary as determined by the LEA, with other agencies providing services to children, youth, and families, including health and social services.
- ◆ An assurance that the LEA will provide services to eligible children in private schools and hold timely and meaningful consultations with private school officials. Since private schools do not participate in Title I, the LEA as the administrative agent would assume responsibility for carrying out parental involvement requirements with the parents of participating children.



Consequently, "meaningful consultation" should include discussion of ways in which the LEA can involve private school parents in their children's participation in Part A.

The LEA's Part A plan must be jointly developed with the parents of participating children, including parents of participating children in private schools. **Additionally, in accordance with section 1118(b)(4), if an LEA's Part A plan is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the LEA must submit any parent comments with the plan when it is submitted to the State.**

### **LEA Parental Involvement Policy**

An LEA must develop jointly with, agree upon with, and distribute to parents of participating children a written parent involvement policy that is incorporated into the LEA's plan.

Section 1118 improves the former parental involvement provisions in two central ways. **First**, it establishes the role of the school in involving parents and clarifies the relationship between the school's role in parental participation and the role of the LEA. This change is in response to research that demonstrates that when schools effectively involve parents, there is a positive impact on student success. **Second**, this section divides the requirements into three components: **(1) policy involvement; (2) shared responsibilities for high student performance; and (3) building capacity for involvement.** These components recognize the full range of roles that parents can play in their children's education as well as the need for parents and schools to develop a partnership and ongoing dialogue around student achievement.

An LEA's written parent involvement policy sets the expectation and establishes the framework for parental participation in the LEA. It should relate directly to the rest of the Part A program and to district policy in general by reflecting the LEA's philosophy with respect to promoting the achievement of **every** child. LEA staff, in conjunction with parents, are urged to modify the policy as LEA needs change. **If the LEA already has a district-level policy that applies to all parents, it may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the Part A parental involvement policy requirements.** An advantage to this would be coordinating the involvement of all parents across any Federal, State, or local programs that the LEA is implementing.

The LEA parental involvement policy must describe how the LEA will do the following specifically enough that parents and school system personnel can readily understand the steps for implementing each requirement:

- ◆ Involve parents in the joint development of its Part A program plan and in the process of school review and improvement.

- ◆ Provide the coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parental involvement.
- ◆ Build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement.
- ◆ Coordinate and integrate Part A parental involvement strategies with those of other programs, e.g., Head Start, Even Start, the Parents as Teachers Program, the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and State-run preschool programs.
- ◆ Conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy to determine whether there has been increased participation and whether there are barriers to greater participation, particularly by parents who are disabled, who have limited English proficiency, limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background.
- ◆ Use the evaluation findings in designing strategies for school improvement and in revising parental involvement policies at the district and school levels.

### **Evaluation of Effectiveness of LEA Parental Involvement Policy**

The statute specifies that an annual evaluation be conducted of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy to determine whether there has been increased participation and whether there are barriers to greater participation by parents who are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background. To carry out such an evaluation, the LEA, in conjunction with participating parents, could consider developing methods for--

- (1) comparing levels of parental participation prior to and following implementation of the newly required policy;
- (2) determining whether the levels of participation of parents who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background are represented in adequate proportions;
- (3) identifying barriers to greater participation by these groups;
- (4) assessing the effectiveness of parental participation activities, procedures, and policy in the improvement of schools;

(5) reporting evaluation findings; and

(6) using evaluation findings to revise school-level policy so that it promotes more specifically the improvement of student academic achievement, the social and emotional welfare of students, and the school's teaching and learning environment.

### **Reservation of Funds**

An LEA with an allocation under Subpart 2 of Part A of over \$500,000 is required to spend at least 1 percent of its allocation for LEA- and school-level parental involvement activities, including family literacy training and training to enhance parenting skills. LEAs, of course, have the option to spend a larger amount. Funds that schools spend for parental involvement activities may count toward meeting this requirement. LEAs with allocations of \$500,000 or less are also responsible for implementing parental involvement activities, although no minimum allocation is required, and may reserve amounts necessary from their Part A allocation to conduct these activities. An LEA may reserve funds for parental involvement activities off the top of its allocation, or the LEA may require its Part A schools to carry out sufficient parent involvement activities from their allotments so that the aggregate of funds supporting such activities equals or exceeds the requisite 1 percent.

Parents of participating children are to be involved in decisions regarding how these funds are spent. Involvement in decision-making should take place before any expenditures are made, be on-going, and continue throughout the fiscal year in which an LEA's allocation is made.

To carry out a joint decision-making process, LEA staff along with parent representatives from all participating schools could solicit and collect parent recommendations through surveys, meetings, hotlines, and so on. This input, to be discussed and reviewed prior to decision-making, would be used as the primary basis for the expenditure of funds reserved for parental involvement activities in the district. Such a process would allow the consideration of diverse needs and interests, and the implementation of programs by LEAs that reflect their particular community's diversity. Throughout the year, newsletters, designated bulletin board announcement locations, meetings, exhibits, and various other methods and media could be used for ongoing communication, information exchange, and the solicitation of additional suggestions for the use of funds. It is usually effective to establish an infrastructure, such as a work team or subgroup, that would assume specific responsibility for the process.

---

## **EXAMPLE--District #112 Parental Partnership Policy Statement**

School District #112 of the Chaska Public Schools in Chaska, Minnesota, adopted the following parental partnership policy. Although it is not Title I-specific, it provides direction and leadership to the district, and makes it clear that parental involvement (of all parents) is a priority.

### **Rationale**

It is the goal of School District #112 to "develop strong partnerships with the home." Parents and schools working as partners increase student achievement and develop positive attitudes about self and school.

The key factor in the home-school partnership is the relationship between the teacher and the parent. Teachers are professionals who manage a variety of instructional resources. Parents are an essential resource in the learning process of their children. Organizational support from the school board, district administrators, and building principals enables teachers to effectively develop the partnership.

The intent of this policy is to result in consciously doing those things already in practice in a more efficient, consistent and effective manner as well as generating new ways of strengthening the partnership.

### **Policy**

The partnership between home and school will be supported by:

1. The development of an infrastructure to continually assess, plan and implement strategies that build the partnership.
  - a. A district-wide committee of parents, teachers, and administrators to guide overall program efforts and serve as a home-school partnership network.
  - b. Coordination of activities through the staff development system in areas of teacher inservice, assessment of teaching strengths, and communication with parents toward creation of the best possible learning experience for each child.

---

### **EXAMPLE Cont'd.-Parental Partnership Statement**

2. Self-study of parental involvement practices by teams of parents, teachers and the administrator in each school using the following seven basic principles considered essential to home-school partnerships.

- a. Every aspect of the school climate is open, helpful and friendly.
- b. Communications with parents (whether about school policies and programs or about their own children) are frequent, clear and two-way.
- c. Parents are treated as collaborators in the educational process, with a strong complementary role to play in their children's school learning and behavior.
- d. Parents are encouraged, both formally and informally, to comment on school policies and to share in the decision making.
- e. The principal and other school administrators actively express and promote the philosophy of partnership with all families.
- f. The school encourages volunteer participation from parents and the community at large.
- g. The school recognizes its responsibility to forge a partnership with all families in the school, not simply those most easily available.

3. Resources will be provided to principals, teachers and parents by the Parent Partnership Liaison.

School District #112, its School Board, and staff will provide leadership in the development of clear avenues of parental involvement. Full realization of the partnership will be achieved through the on-going commitment and active participation by both home and school.

---

## **THE SCHOOL LEVEL**

### **SCHOOL PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY**

In addition to an LEA parent involvement policy, each Part A participating school must jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parental involvement policy, agreed upon by these parents, that describes the means for carrying out school-level policy, sharing responsibility for high student performance, building the capacity of school staff and parents for involvement, and increasing accessibility for participation of parents with limited English proficiency or with disabilities. Such policy must be updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.

It is important to understand that the involvement of families in their children's education is not limited solely to attendance at PTO meetings or volunteering at school. What parents do at home with their children is even more important to the total educational effort, and schools need to let parents know that they value both their contributions at school and their participation at home.

**If a school has a parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, it may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the Part A parental involvement requirements.**

## **I. Policy Involvement**

A school's written policy should describe specifically enough for parents and school system personnel to readily understand how each participating Part A school will do the following:

- ◆ Convene an annual meeting to inform parents of their school's participation in Part A, to explain Part A's requirements, and their right to be involved. In preparation for this meeting, efforts should be made to determine the most convenient time for parents of participating children to attend and to determine the most reliable method for ensuring that parents receive notice.
- ◆ Offer a flexible number of meetings, such as in the morning or evening, and provide, if necessary, with Part A funds transportation, child care, or home visits as these services relate to parental involvement.
- ◆ Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of Part A programs, including the school parental involvement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan, if any. **If a school has in place a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of its general education programs, the school may use that process as long as there is adequate representation of parents of participating children, and it conforms to, and is effective in implementing, the parental involvement requirements of Part A.**
- ◆ Provide parents of participating children--
  - (a) **timely information** about Part A programs;
  - (b) **school performance profiles** required under section 1116(a)(3), where the LEA must assess annually the progress of each participating school;
  - (c) **their child's individual student assessment results**, including an interpretation of such results;

(d) **a description and explanation of the curriculum** in use at the school, the forms of assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet;

(e) **opportunities for regular meetings** to formulate suggestions, share experiences with other parents, and participate as appropriate in decisions relating to the education of their children if parents express an interest in doing this; and

(f) **timely responses to the suggestions** made by parents that have been offered in meetings such as those described in (e) above; and

- ◆ **If the schoolwide program plan is not satisfactory to parents, the school will submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the LEA.**

In addition to determining the most convenient time for parents to attend meetings and the most reliable method for ensuring that parents receive notice of them, school staff may want to consider holding some meetings in locations other than schools.

## **II. Shared Responsibilities for High Student Performance**

### **School-Parent Compacts**

This subsection corresponds to a major theme and new emphasis of the ESEA to link schools, parents, and communities in order to meet the educational needs of the children with whom they are involved. It builds on the belief that school-community links are critical to creating environments where all children can reach high standards. These links are encouraged by the school-parent compact--designed to increase the sharing of responsibility between families and schools for the high performance of students. As a component of the school-level parental involvement policy, all Part A schools are required to develop jointly with the parents of participating children a school-parent compact. If the school-level policy includes a school-parent compact already, the existing compact may be used to meet this requirement as long as it meets the Part A compact provisions explained in subsequent paragraphs, and includes Part A parents.

Since Part A serves as the catalyst to strengthen and improve the entire instructional program in schoolwide program schools, school-parent compacts must be developed with all parents of the students enrolled. In targeted assistance schools, school-parent compacts must be developed jointly with the parents of participating Part A students. Although compacts are a good idea for all families and schools, in targeted assistance schools, they are required only for participating Part A families. (An LEA and school should make it clear to families that obtaining parental signature for such learning compacts is strongly encouraged, yet voluntary.)

## **What is a school-parent compact?**

A compact is a written agreement of shared responsibility that--

- ◆ Defines the goals and expectations of schools and parents as **partners** in the effort to improve student achievement.
- ◆ Outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will work together and build a **partnership** to help students achieve high academic standards.
- ◆ Translates the policies and goals of parents and schools into "action" statements. (i.e., What will administrators, teachers, and parents do to make policies and goals a reality?)
- ◆ Serves as a catalyst for collaboration and a guide for ongoing, better communication, interactions and exchanges between school staff and parents.

## **Why A Compact?**

A compact provides the opportunity for developing strong school-family partnerships that will connect families and schools, as well as the broader community, and promote shared responsibility for the high performance of students. These partnerships can--

- ◆ improve school programs and the school climate;
- ◆ increase the skills and leadership abilities of parents;
- ◆ ensure the provision of family services and support;
- ◆ sustain long-term improvement in student academic achievement; and
- ◆ help teachers, parents, and schools to be more effective.

However, the main reason for a compact and school-family partnerships is to help students succeed in meeting the challenging academic standards that all students are expected to master.

## **What a School-Parent Compact Must Include**

There is no required format or standard way to write a compact. A school-parent compact, however, is required to--

- (1) **Describe a school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables**



**participating students to meet the State's challenging student performance standards;**

- (2) Describe the ways in which parents will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, volunteering in their children's classroom, participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and encouraging the positive use of extracurricular time; and**
- (3) Address the importance of establishing ongoing, good communication between teachers and parents through, at a minimum, (1) annual parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools to discuss individual student achievement as it relates to provisions of the compact, (2) frequent progress reports to families on student academic progress, and (3) reasonable access to staff and opportunities to volunteer, observe, and participate in classroom activities.**

---

### **Some Basic Elements of Good Practice for Developing a School-Parent Compact**

Identify challenging standards used by your school, LEA, and State to guide curriculum and instruction.

Build ownership--share information and make certain the ideas of the whole community are represented.

Gather input--focus on the vision of teaching and learning created by your school community.

Make certain specific responsibilities are clearly stated, meaningful, and reflect the ideas and beliefs of your school community--make the compact accessible.

Use the compact to--

- clarify expectations;
- plan training activities;
- help administrators clarify efforts; and
- help teachers, parents and students to make choices about how they spend their time.

Continually assess the effectiveness of the compact (at least annually) and use results to implement improvements.

---

Although compacts must include how schools and families will address the provisions of section 1118(d), they should reflect the ideas and beliefs of individual schools and communities. These requirements are a beginning, offering school communities the flexibility to create a compact that is useful to them. Since compacts define mutual responsibilities at the school building level, good practice suggests that the process of developing common goals and expectations among parents, teachers and administrators is as important as the written compact itself.

#### **Who Participates in Compact Development?**

At a minimum, the parents and teachers of participating students and school administrators who will be responsible for carrying out the compact, or their designated representatives, should participate in its development. Student participation will probably vary by grade level. They may be an integral part of the compact team at the secondary and middle school levels, but be involved less extensively at the elementary school level. Other participants may include pupil services personnel, local school board members, and businesses and

agencies with whom partnerships have been formed to support the school, families, and individual children. Schools and parents have the discretion to determine who will be involved in the development of their compacts. Parents and teachers are urged to discuss the compact with students before they sign it, and, when applicable, before any students sign it.

A compact can only be as effective as the ideas it represents and the commitment and support participants give to those ideas. In order to help improve the academic success of students and to ensure that benefits accrue to the entire school community, the school-parent compact must reflect realistically what stakeholders will do, be focused specifically on teaching and learning, and be explicit enough to encourage meaningful contributions toward this end.

---

### **SOME IDEAS FOR DEVELOPING A COMPACT**

- Step 1:** Create a vision of what your school would be like if it is a "family-friendly school" that has established a strong school-family partnership.
  - Step 2:** Prepare for compact development--Conduct an inventory, create a cross-representative action team, define action team responsibilities.
  - Step 3:** Develop components of a "School Compact for Learning"--Identify objectives and school-family responsibilities.
  - Step 4:** Establish a performance baseline--Agree on processes essential to success and outcomes that would indicate success, and develop performance indicators to measure performance.
  - Step 5:** Each year evaluate the effectiveness of the family-school partnership process--Evaluate against baseline, measure performance, and analyze and report results.
  - Step 6:** Identify improvement strategies based on evaluation findings--Create a partnership improvement team, review results, identify practices that promote better performance, and implement improvements.
-

### **III. Building Capacity for Involvement**

To support partnerships among schools, parents, and communities that will improve student achievement, both the school and LEA are required to build the capacity of parents and school staff for strong parental involvement by--

- ◆ providing assistance to participating parents in understanding the National Education Goals, State content and performance standards, State and local assessments, and Title I, Part A requirements; monitoring their children's progress, working with educators to improve the performance of their children; and providing information on how parents can participate in decisions relating to the education of their children.
- ◆ providing materials and training, such as needed literacy training, not otherwise available, and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement.
- ◆ educating teachers, pupil services personnel, principals, and staff, with the assistance of parents, on how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, coordinate and implement parent programs, and build ties between home and school.
- ◆ coordinating and integrating parental involvement programs/activities with Head Start, Even Start, Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, Parents as Teachers Program, public preschool programs, and other programs, to the extent feasible and appropriate.
- ◆ developing appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses and encouraging partnerships between elementary, middle, and secondary schools.
- ◆ conducting other activities, as appropriate and feasible, such as parent resource centers and opportunities for parents to learn about child development and child rearing (beginning at the birth of a child), that are designed to help parents become full partners in the education of their children.
- ◆ ensuring, to the extent possible, that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the home of participating children in the language parents can understand.

To ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school, parents, and the community to improve student achievement, each school and local educational agency may--

- ◆ involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training in improving instruction and services to participating children.
- ◆ provide necessary literacy training if the LEA has exhausted all other reasonably available sources of funds.
- ◆ pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parental involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school meetings and training sessions.
- ◆ train and support parents to enhance the involvement of other parents.
- ◆ maximize opportunities for parents to participate in school-related activities by arranging meetings at a variety of times, such as in the mornings and evenings.
- ◆ arrange for teachers or other educators to conduct in-home conferences with parents who are unable to attend such conferences at school.
- ◆ adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement, such as Even Start.

To ensure effective parental involvement and to support a school-parent-community partnership, each school and local educational agency shall--

- ◆ provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under Part A as parents may request.

---

### Strategies for Low-Literacy Families

To help parents who would like to read and write better, Title I guidelines suggest working cooperatively with other programs such as Even Start, Head Start, and the school system's adult literacy program.

### Organizational Hints

- \* Give parents a chance to practice any major activity in a low-risk setting. Support their efforts to make changes. Some parents may feel more relaxed practicing an activity in a meeting that includes their own child; in other words, explain an activity and then give parents an opportunity to try it out with their child. Others may prefer to practice new activities with a sympathetic adult first, before trying them out with their child at home.
- \* Consider meeting in a church or community center or public library--wherever parents feel comfortable--rather than at school.

### Goals for a literacy strand

In the family involvement section of the Title I plan, three goals could be included in a literacy strand:

1. Show parents how to participate in sharing books and ideas with their children.
  2. Improve the literacy skills of the adults.
  3. Build adults' confidence in their ability to help their children.
- \* From, Boost Family Involvement-How to Make Your Program Succeed under the New Title I Guidelines, by Eleanor C. Macfarlane, Associate Director, Family Literacy Center

---

### Building Parental Capacity in Schoolwide Programs

As explained in Implementing Schoolwide Projects: An Idea Book, to obtain significant increases in parental involvement, successful schoolwide programs actively engage parents in planning and learning and target school-parent programs to the needs of the community and families. Program staff understand the importance of parental involvement and its relationship to student achievement and encourage parents to become their partners. Parental participation is not limited to parents serving as volunteers; they are encouraged to be very

active in all school activities and to form organizations. Cooperation between home and school enables staff to maximize instructional time and to create a school environment where parents as well as children can learn. As the requirements cited below reflect, parents and families have a significant role to play in developing and carrying out a schoolwide program. Section 1114(b) describes these requirements, which include, among others, those for--

- ◆ professional development for teachers and aides, and, where appropriate, parents, pupil services personnel, principals, and other staff to enable all children in the school to meet the State's student performance standards;
- ◆ strategies to increase parental involvement, such as family literary services;
- ◆ teacher-parent conferences for any student who has not met State standards, at which they shall discuss improvement strategies, including what the parents can do to help improve student performance;
- ◆ a comprehensive schoolwide program plan that describes how the school will provide individual student assessment results, including an interpretation of those results, to the parents of a child who participates in the assessment;
- ◆ a comprehensive schoolwide program plan that shall be developed with the involvement of the community to be served and the individuals who will carry it out, including teachers, principals, other staff, and, where appropriate, parents, pupil services personnel, and secondary school students when the plan relates to them; and
- ◆ a comprehensive schoolwide program that shall be available to the LEA, parents, and the public, whose information shall be translated, to the extent feasible, into any language that a significant percentage of the parents of participating children in the school speak.

---

### Building Capacity--Example #1

#### Successful Schoolwide Programs--A Place Where Parents and Students Can Learn

- \* Richmond Elementary School in Salem, Oregon designed "Together with Families," a partnership program that uses a comprehensive approach to developing and cementing school and home relationships. Parents take various leadership roles within the school and community, offering parenting courses and meeting in neighborhood homes to learn how to foster children's learning in school and at home.

Components of other successful schoolwide programs that follow the philosophy that school is a place where parents as well as children can learn include--

- \* Teachers videotaping classroom events for parents to broaden their understanding of the program.
  - \* Many schools offer ESL classes and General Education Diploma (GED) preparation courses for adults; stock family resource centers or libraries with helpful materials and hold evening classes that teach practical skills, such as computer use.
  - \* Parent or teacher liaisons visit parents at home to provide information on child development and parenting, or to keep parents with limited English proficiency informed about their children's progress.
-



---

**EXAMPLE #2--BUILDING PARENTAL CAPACITY: Parent University--A Title I Program in the Bakersfield City School District**

**"Helping Parents Help Their Children Succeed"**

The staff of the school district's Specially Funded Projects wanted to do something spectacular for the coming school year in the area of parental involvement, and that it is how the concept of a "Parent University" was formed. A task force was organized of several principals, teachers, consultants, community relations specialists, administrators, and parents and convened for a brainstorming session. After four meetings, a program name and logo were created, and a schedule of sessions for the first year was developed to be held at Bakersfield College.

The first meetings resulted in choosing a topic of interest and finding a qualified speaker to provide informative and lecture-style sessions. Parents were required to attend four sessions throughout the school year in order to graduate from Parent University. Barriers of defeat were removed by offering good child care, transportation, and food. All books and other class materials were provided as well, at no cost to parents.

First year evaluation results of the Parent University program were very positive. The findings indicated, however, that parents wanted to talk to each other more in order to find out how other parents were solving problems with their children. Consequently, the quest began for top-quality parenting classes. The Center for the Improvement of Child Caring (CICC) was contacted to obtain information on the parenting training programs it makes available to parents and parent instructors. As a result, Parent University expanded its offerings to include five parenting programs from CICC--*Active Parenting*, *Active Parenting of Teens*, *Confident Parenting*, *Effective Black Parenting*, and *Los Ninos Bien Educados*. The task force is always looking for new and effective programs, and has added two more in the last two years--*Developing Capable People*, *Megaskills*.

Parenting classes are offered in English, Spanish, and Laotian, and are held during the week and on Saturday mornings. The child care program provides so many activities for children that they love to come to class with their parents.

Since the inception of Parent University in 1990, there have been 1,000 parents, grandparents, step-parents, foster parents, guardians, aunts, and uncles to graduate. Parents must complete 75 percent of a class to graduate and earn a diploma. Some of the graduates are now trainers.

---